January 22. 1688.

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THE JUDGMENT OF Archbiſhop CRANMER Concerning the Peoples Right to, and Diſcreet Uſe OF THE H. SCRIPTURES.

BIB. CANT. CAL.

LONDON:
Printed for *John Taylor*, at the Ship in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1689.

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THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

IT may seem very strange to some in the World, to consider the different Fate of the Holy Scriptures among Christians, how very contrary their Affections are towards that Book; yet I for my part, do no more Wonder at the Fury of the Members of the Church of Rome *against the Holy Bible, than at the Protestants Zeal for it: Since the learned part of the Church of* Rome *know that their present Religion, and the new Articles of it are not to be found in that Book; and the Unlearned part are told and believe, That it is a very dangerous Book; and therefore both of them, not without great Cause (as they think) have Reason to be angry and violent against that Book: But since Protestants do find, to their infinite Satisfaction, their Religion in the Bible, they think they cannot express too great a Veneration for it, and believe that their Honour and Zeal for it, ought at least to be as great as the Papists Fury and Anger against it.*

And

And yet as angry as those People are at the Holy Scriptures, when they were about Converting us all here, and the new Trade of Representing Popery was set up among us, they had so much Wit, as to perceive that abundance of Skill and Art must be necessary to get the Bible out of the Peoples Hands; and that their best way was not to be too severe upon the Bible it self, but to spend all their Pains upon disparaging Our Bible.

This was none of the worst Projects; for if the Priests could but once have gained so far upon the People, as to have made them out of Love with Our Bible, *and to have got it out of their Hands, they needed not despair of gaining so much further upon them, as to make them altogether careless of having any Bible at all, and far from being desirous of having another Translation instead of ours.*

The gaining of this Point was the Design of the Famous Popish Chappel in Lime street; *where it was the Jesuites Province to cast all the Dirt they could upon our Bible, and to run down our Translation, as nothing but a mere heap of Falsities: And some of them,* Father Petre, *for example, were so furious as not only to charge our Translation with such gross Falsities and Misinterpretations, but our Clergy with knowing it to be so, and yet not daring (for filthy Lucre's sake) to acknowledge it.*

My Business shall not be to meddle with the Scandal, which needs no other Confutation than to say, It came from a Jesuite's Mouth; and which is more, from Father Petre's *Mouth, Brother to the late Jesuite-Privy-Counsellour: I intend only to vindicate our Bible from those false Aspersions and Calumnies of the Jesuites, by shewing that our Translation ought not to be objected against at all, by any Church in the World; much less by the Church of* Rome; *but least of all by those People, who have undertaken to do it so liberally in our own Nation.*

Our

Our Translation ought not to be objected against by any Church in the World; because after the several Reviews of it, and the vast Pains of so many very Learned Men upon it in King James *the First Days, we may without Vanity say, That it is as Perfect, and as Compleat, as any Translation in use in any Church in the World. We do not pretend that it is perfectly free from Mistakes, or the least Errour; as no Translation of the Bible ever was so perfect, So, I believe, none ever will, or can, as long as Men not Inspired have the Charge of Translating; but this we say, and challenge the World to disprove it, That it is freed from all material Faults, and that it is accurate as to Matters of Faith and Good Manners: the Errors about which can only be Dangerous to Mankind.*

And as no Church now in the World ought to accuse our Translation, so much less ought the Church of Rome *to do it, whose Latin Translation of the Bible is so full of material Faults. For not to insist upon those Numerous and Great Differences betwixt the two Bibles of Pope* Sixtus Quintus *and* Clement *VIII. which yet both of them, under the Pain of Excommunication are declared to be Authentick.* Isidore Clarius, *a learned Spanish Bishop, does own, That the Errours in their Vulgar Latin are almost numberless, and he himself has observed eight thousand Places erroneous in it: And which is more, there are not only Literal Mistakes, Omissions or Additions of single Words in their Bibles; but in one Book of the Old Testament alone, to wit in the* Proverbs, *there are not fewer than eighteen whole Verses or Sentences, which are not in the Original* Hebrew: *So that the Church of* Rome, *of all Churches, should not charge us with Errours in our Translation.*

And if their Church should not meddle with such things, I am sure those Priests who undertook it in the Popish Chappel in Lime-street, *should, of all Men, have been excused from such a Task. They that would be medling with*

with the Corrections of Translations, ought to be perfectly skilled in the Original Tongues, in the Hebrew and Chaldee for the Old Testament, in the Greek and Syriac for the New. Now, how far Father Peirce, or the rest of the Lime-street-Priests, were from being thus qualified for the Noble Province of busling our Translation of the Bible, the World is almost as well satisfied as their own Consciences. I am perswaded, That not only Hebrew, Chaldee and Syriack are utterly unknown to them, but that Greek is almost as unintelligible. Popery has been a long time an Enemy to Learning; and in our Days, I am sure, the Jesuites have approved themselves to be the best Papists, that is, the most ignorant Dunces: Who upon this account ought not to meddle with Matters of Learning, especially wherein great skill in Languages is so requisite.

After all, I am fully convinced, that all that Fury and Vehemence in the Lime-street Chappel, was much more intended against the Holy Bible it self, than against our Translation of it. Their Church has taught 'em a new Faith, and therefore since the Old Bible has it not in it, they are for throwing it aside, as Old and Useless, especially to the People; whose Right to the Use of that Holy Book is the Subject of this Tract of the most Venerable Martyr of Christ, Archbishop Cranmer, to the perusal of which you are now invited.

The

The Judgment of Archbishop Cranmer, concerning the Holy Scriptures.

COncerning two sundrie sorts of people, it seemeth much necessarie that something be saide in the entrie of the Bookes, by the way of a Preface or Prologue, whereby hereafter it may bee both the better accepted of them which hitherto could not well beare in, and also the better vsed of them which heretofore have misused it. For truely some there are that be too slowe, and needs the Spurre, some other seeme too quicke, and neede more of the bridle: some loose their game by short shooting, some by ouer shooting, some walke too much on the left hand, some too much on the right. In the former sort be all they that refuse to reade, or to heare read the Scripture in the vulgare tongue, which doe they that let also or discourage the other from the reading or hearing thereof. In the latter sort be they which by their inordinate reading, undiscrete speaking, contentious disputing, or otherwise by their licentious living, slander and hinder the Worde of God most of all other, whereof they woulde seeme to be greatest furtherers. These two sortes, albeit they be most farre vnlike the one to the other, yet they both deserue in effect like reproche; neither can I well tell whether of them I may iudge the more offender, him that doeth obstinately refuse so godly and goodly knowledge, or him that so vngodly and so vngoodly doeth abuse the same. And as touching the former, I would marueile much that any man shoulde be

so madde, as to refuse in darkenesse, light: in hunger, foode: in colde, fire: for the Worde of God is light: *Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum.* Thy worde is a lanterne unto my feet. It is foode: *Non in solo pane viuit homo, sed in omni verbo Dei.* Man shall not live by bread onely, but by euery worde of God. It is fire: *Ignem veni mittere in terram, & quid volo, nisi ut ardeat?* I am come to sende fire on the earth, and what is my desire, but that it be kindled? I would marueile (I say at this) saue that I consider how much custome and vsage may do. So that if there were a people, as some write, *de Cymeriis*, which neuer sawe the Sunne, by reason that they be situated farre towarde the North pole, and be inclosed or ouershadowed with high mountaines: it is credible and like ynough, that if by the power and will of God, the mountaines should sinke downe, and give place, that the light of the Sunne might haue entrance to them, at the first some of them would be offended therewith. And the olde prouerbe affirmeth, that after tillage of corne was first found, many delighted more to feede of maste and acornes, wherewith they had bene accustomed, then to eat bread made of good corne. Such is the nature of custome, that it causeth vs to beare all things well and easily wherewith we haue bene accustomed, and to bee offended with all thinges thereunto contrary. And therefore I can well thinke them worthy pardon, which at the comming abroad of Scripture doubted and drewe backe. But such as will persist still in their wilfulness, I must needs iudge not onely foolish frowarde, and obstinate: but also peevish, peruerse, and indurate. And yet, if the matter shoulde be tried by custome, wee might also allodge custome for the reading of the Scripture in the vulgare tongue, and prescribe the more ancient custome. For it is not much aboue one hundreth yeere agoe, since Scripture hath not

Psa. 119. 105.

Matth. 4. 4.

Luke 12. 49.

bene

bene accustomed to be read in the vulgare tongue within this Realm, many hundreth yeres before that it was translated & read in the Saxons tongue, which at that time was our mother tongue, whereof there remain yet diuers copies founde lately in olde Abbeys, of such antique manner of writing & speaking, that fewe men now be able to read and vnderstande them. And when this language waxed old and out of common vsage, because folke shoulde not lacke the fruite of reading, it was againe translated into the newer language, whereof yet also many copies remaine, and be daily founde. But now to let passe custome, and to wey, as wise men euer should, the thinges in his owne nature: let vs here discusse what is auaileth Scripture to be had and read of the lay and vulgare people. And to this question I intend here to say nothing, but that was spoken and written by the noble doctour and most morall diuine, Saint Iohn Chrisostome, in his third Sermon de Lazaro, albeit I will therein something shorten, and gather the matter into fewer wordes, and lesse roome then he doeth there, because I would not be tedious. He exhorteth there his audience, that euery man should reade by himself at home in the meane dayes and times betweene Sermon and Sermon, to the intent they might both more profoundly fixe in their mindes and memories that he had saide before vpon such textes, whereupon hee had alreadie preached: and also that they might haue their mindes the more readie and better prepared to receiue and perceiue that which he should say from thence forth in his Sermons, upon such textes as he had not yet declared and preached vpon: therefore saith he there, My common vsage is to giue you warning before, what matter I intend after to intreate vpon, that you your selues in the meane dayes may take the booke in hand, reade, wey, and perceiue the fruite and effect of the matter, and marke what hath bene declared, and what remaineth yet to be declared, so

that thereby your minde may be the more furnished to heare the rest that shall be saide. And that I exhort you (saith he) and euer haue and will exhort you, that you (not only here in the Church) giue care to that that is saide by the Preacher; but that also when you bee at home in your houses, ye applye your selues from time to time to the reading of holy Scriptures: which thing also I never sinne to beate into the eares of them that be my familiars, and with whom I haue priuate acquaintance and conuersation. Let no man make excuse and say (saith hee) I am busied about matters of the Commonwealth, I beare this office, or that, I am a craftes man, I must applie mine occupation, I haue a wife, my children must be fedde, my housholde must I provide for, briefly I am a man of the worlde, it is not for me to reade the Scriptures, that belongeth to them that haue bidden the world farewell, which liue in solitarinesse, and contemplation, and haue bene brought vp and continually nousled in learning and Religion. To this answering, What sayest thou man (saith hee?) Is it not for thee to studie and to reade the Scriptures, because thou art encumbred and distract with cares and businesse? So much the more it is behoouefull for thee to haue defence of Scriptures, howe much thou art the more distressed in worldly dangers. They that be free and farre from trouble and intermedling of worldly thinges, liue in safeguard and tranquillitie, and in the calme, or within a sure hauen. Thou art in the middest of the sea of worldly wickednesse, and therefore thou needest the more of ghostly succour and comfort. They sit farre from the strokes of battell, and farre out of gunne shotte, and therefore they be but seldome wounded. Thou that standest in the forefront of the hoste, & nighest to thine enemies, must needs take more and then many strookes, and bee grieuously wounded, and therefore thou hast most needs to haue thy remedies and medicines at

hande. Thy wife prouoketh thee to anger, thy childe giueth thee occasion to take sorrowe and pensiuenesse, thine enemies lie in waite for thee, thy friend (as thou takest him) sometimes enuieth thee, thy neighbour misreporteth thee, or pyketh quarels against thee, thy mate or partner vndermineth thee, thy Lorde, Iudge, or Iustice threatneth thee, pouerty is painefull vnto thee, the losse of thy deare and welbeloued causeth thee to mourne, prosperity exalteth thee, aduersitie bringeth thee lowe: briefly, so diuers and so manifolde occasions of cares, tribulations, and temptations beset thee, and besiege thee round about. Where canst thou haue armour or fortresse against thine assaultes? Where canst thou haue salues for thy sores, but of holy Scripture? Thy flesh must needes be prone and subiect to fleshly lusts, which dayly walkest and art conuersant among women, seest their beautie set foorth to the eye, hearest their nice and wanton wordes, smellest their balm, ciuit and muske, with many other like prouocations and stirrings: except thou hast in a readinesse wherewith to suppresse and auoyd them, which cannot elsewhere be had, but only out of the holy Scriptures. Let vs reade and seeke all remedies that we can, and all shall be little ynough. Howe shall we then doe, if we suffer and take dayly woundes, and when we haue done, will sit still and search for no medicines? Doest thou not marke and consider howe the Smith, Mason, or Carpenter, or any other handicrafteman, what needs soeuer he be in, what other shift soeuer he make, he will not sell nor lay to pledge the tools of his occupation: for then howe should he worke his feate, or get his liuing thereby? Of like minde and affection ought we to be towardes holy Scripture. For as mallets, hammers, sawes, chesils, axes and hatchets be the tooles of their occupation: so be the bookes of the Prophets, and Apostles, and all holy writers inspired by the holy Ghost, the instruments of our saluation. Where-

fore

fore let vs not sticke to buy and prouide vs the Bible, that is to say, the Bookes of holy Scripture, and let vs thinke that to be a better iewell in our house, then either golde or siluer. For like as theeues be loth to assault an house where they knowe to bee good armour and artillerie: so whersoeuer these holy and ghostly Bookes be occupied, there neither the deuill nor none of his angels dare come neere. And they that occupie them be in much safegarde, and haue a great consolation, and be the readier vnto all goodnes, the slower vnto all euill: and if they haue done any thing amisse, anon euen by the sight of the Bookes their consciences be admonished, and they waxe sorie and ashamed of the fact. Peraduenture they will say vnto me, How and if we understand not that we reade, that is conteined in the Bookes? What then? Suppose thou vnderstand not the deepe and profound mysteries of Scriptures, yet can it not be but that much fruite and holinesse must come and growe vnto thee by the reading: for it cannot be that thou shouldest be ignorant in all things alike. For the holy Ghost hath so ordered and attempered the Scriptures, that in them as well Publicans, sinners, and shepheards may finde their edification, as great doctours their erudition. For those Bookes were not made to vaineglory, like as were the writings of the Gentile Philosophers & Rhetoricians, to the intent the makers shoulde be had in admiration for their hie stiles and obscure maner and writing, whereof nothing can be vnderstanded without a maister or an expositour: But the Apostles and Prophetes wrote their Bookes so, that their speciall intent and purpose might be vnderstanded and perceiued of euery reader, which was nothing but the edification of amendement of the life of them that reade or heare it. Who is it that reading or hearing read in the Gospel, *Blessed be they that be meeke, Blessed are they that are mercifull, Blessed are they that be of clean heart*, and such other like

places,

places, can perceiue nothing except hee haue a maſter to teache him what it meaneth? Likewiſe the ſignes and miracles, with all other Hiſtories of the doings of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, who is there of ſo ſimple witte and capacity, but he may be able to perceiue and vnderſtand them? Theſe be but excuſes and clokes for the raine, and couerings of their own ſlouthfulneſſe. But ſtill ye will ſay, I cannot underſtand it. What marvail? How ſhouldeſt thou underſtand, if thou wilt not read nor look upon it? Take the Bookes into thine hands, read the whole ſtorie, and that thou vnderſtandeſt keepe it well in memory: that thou vnderſtandeſt not, reade it againe, and againe: if thou can neither ſo come by it, counſell with ſome other that is better learned. Go to the Curate and Preacher, ſhewe thy ſelfe to be deſirous to knowe and learne; and I doubt not but God ſeeing thy diligence and readineſſe (if no man elſe teache thee) will himſelfe vouchſafe with his holy Spirit to illuminate thee, and to open vnto thee that which was locked from thee. Remember the Eunuch of *Candace* Queen of Ethiopia, which albeit hee was a man of a wilde and barbarous countrey, and one occupied with worldly cares and buſineſſe, yet ryding in his charet, he was reading the Scripture. Now conſider, if this man paſſing in his iourney, was ſo diligent as to reade the Scripture: what thinkeſt thou of like was he wont to do ſitting at home? Againe, hee that letted not to reade, albeit he did not vnderſtand: what did he then troweſt thou, after that when he had learned and gotten vnderſtanding? For that thou mayeſt well knowe that hee vnderſtood not what he read, hearken what Philip ſaith there vnto him, Vnderſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt? And he nothing aſhamed to confeſſe his ignorance, anſwered, Howe ſhould I vnderſtande, hauing no body to ſhewe mee the way? Loe when he lacked one to ſhewe him the way, and to expounde to him the Scriptures, yet did hee reade; and there-

therefore God the rather prouided for him a guide of the way, that taught him to vnderstand it. God perceiued his willing and towarde minde, and therefore he sent him a teacher by and by. Therefore let no man be negligent about his own health and saluation. Though thou haue not Philip alwayes when thou wouldest, the holy Ghost which then mooued and stirred up Philip, will be readie and not faile thee, if thou do thy diligence accordingly. All these thinges be written vnto vs for our edification and amendment, which be borne towardes the latter ende of the worlde. The reading of the Scriptures is a great and strong bulwarke or fortresse against sinne: the ignorance of the same is a greater ruine and destruction of them that will not know it. That is the thing that bringeth in heresie, that is it that causeth all corrupt and peruerse liuing, that is it that bringeth all thinges out of good order. Hitherto all that I haue said, I haue taken and gathered out of the foresaide Sermon of this holy Doctour Saint Iohn Chrysostome. Nowe if I should in like maner bring forth what the self same doctour speaketh in other places, and what other doctours and writers say concerning the same purpose, I might seeme to you to write another Bible, rather then to make a Preface to the Bible. Wherefore in fewe wordes to comprehende the largenesse and vtility of the Scriptures, howe it contayneth fruitfull instruction and erudition for euery man, if any thing be necessary to be learned, of the holy Scripture we may well learn it. If falshood shall be reprooued, thereof we may gather wherewithall. If any thing be to be corrected and amended, if there need any exhortation or consolation, of the Scripture we may well learn. In the Scriptures be the fatte pastures of the soul, therein is no venomous meate, no vnwholesome thing, they be the very daintie and pure feeding. Hee that is ignorant shall finde there what he shoulde learne. He that is a

peruerse

perverse sinner, shall there finde his damnation, to make him to tremble for feare. He that labourers to serue God, shall finde there his glory, and the promissions of eternall life, exhorting him more diligently to labour. Herein may Princes learne howe to gouerne their Subiects: Subiects obedience, loue and dread to their Princes: husbands howe they shoulde behaue themselues vnto their wiues, how to educate their children and seruants: And contrary, the wiues, children, and seruants may knowe their dutie to their husbands, parents, and masters. Here all maner of persons, men, women, young, olde, learned, vnlearned, rich, poor, priests, laymen, lords, ladies, officers, tenants, and meane men, virgins, wiues, widowes, lawyers, marchants, artificers, husbandmen, and all maner of persons, of what estate or condition soeuer they be, may in this booke learne all thinges what they ought to beleeue, what they ought to do, and what they should not do, as well concerning Almightie God, as also concerning themselues and all other. Briefly, to the reading of the Scripture, none can be enemie, but that either be so sicke that they loue not to heare of any medicine, or else that be so ignorant that they knowe not Scripture to be the most healthfull medicine. Therefore as touching this former parte, I will here conclude, and take it for a conclusion, sufficiently determined and appointed, that it is conuenient and good, the Scriptures to be read of all sortes and kindes of people, and in the vulgare tongue, without further allegations or probations for the same, which shall not need, since that this one place of Iohn Chrysostome is ynough, and sufficient to perswade all them that be not frowardly and perversly set in their owne wilfull opinion, specially now that the Kings highnesse being Supreme head next vnder Christ of this Church of Eng-

The Conclusion.

The Kings highnesse hath allowed the Scripture as necessarie for vs.

land, hath approued with his royall assent the setting foorth hereof, which onley to all true and obedient Subiects ought to be a sufficient reason for the allowance of the same, without further delay, reclamation or resistance, although there were no Preface, or other reason herein expressed. Therefore now to come to the second or latter part of my purpose: here is nothing so good in this worlde, but it may be abused, and turned from vnhurtfull and wholsome, to hurtfull and noysome. What is there aboue better then the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres? Yet was there that tooke occasion by the great beautie and vertue of them, to dishonour God, and to defile themselues with idolatrie, giuing the honour of the liuing God and Creatour of all things, to such thinges as he had created. What is there here beneathe better then fire, water, meates, drinkes mettals of golde, siluer, yron, and steele? Yet we see dayly great harme and much mischiefe done by euery one of these, aswell for lacke of wisdome and prouidence of them that suffer euill, as by the malice of them that worke the euill. Thus to them that be euill of themselues, euery thing setteth forwarde and encreaseth their euill, be it of his owne nature a thing neuer so good: like as contrarily, to them that studie and endeuour themselues to goodnesse, euery thing preuaileth them, and profiteth vnto good, be it of his owne nature a thing neuer so bad, as Saint Paul saith, *His qui diligunt Deum, omnia cooperantur in bonum.* All thinges do bring good successe, to such as do loue God, euen as out of most venemous wormes is made triacle, the most soueraigne medicine for the preseruation of mans health in time of danger. Wherefore I woulde aduise you all that come to the reading or hearing of this Booke, which is the Word of God, the most precious iewell, and most holy relique that remaineth vpon earth, that ye bring with you the

There is nothing but may be abused. Rom. 8.

the feare of God, and that ye do it with all due reuerence, and vse your knowledge thereof, not to vaineglory of friuolous disputation: but to the honour of God, encrease of vertue, and edification both of your selues and others. And to the intent that my words may be the more regarded, I will vse in this part the authoritie of S. Gregory Nazianzene, like as in the other I did of S. Iohn Chrysostome. It appeareth that in his time there were some (as I feare me there be also now at these dayes a great nomber) which were idle brablers, and talkers of the Scripture out of season and all good order, and without any encrease of vertue, or example of good living: to them he writeth all his first Booke *de Theologia*. Wherefore I shall briefly gather the whole effect, and recite it here vnto you. There be some (saith he) whose not only eares and tongues, but also their fistes be whetted and readie bent all to contention and vnprofitable disputation, whome I would wish as they be vehement and earnest to reason the matter with tongue, so they were all readie and practiue to doe good deedes. But for as much as they subuerting the order of all godlinesse, haue respect only to this thing, how they may bintle and loose subtill questions, so that nowe euery marketplace, euery alehouse and tauerne, euery feasthouse, briefly euery company of men, euery assemblie of women, is filled with such talke: Since the matter is so (saith he) and that our faith and holy Religion of Christ beginneth to waxe nothing else but as it were a sophistrie or a talking craft, I can no lesse doe but say something thereunto. It is not fit (saith he) for euery man to dispute the high questions of Diuinitie, neither is it to be done at all times, neither in euery audience must we discusse euery doubt: but we must knowe when, to whome, and howe farre we ought to enter into such matters. First, it is not for every man, but it is for such as be of exact and exquisite iudgments, and such as haue spent their time before in

ſtudie and contemplation, and ſuch as before haue cleanſed themſelues aſwell in ſoule as bodie, or at the leaſt endeuored themſelues to be made cleane. For it is dangerous (ſaith he) for the vncleane to touch that thing which is moſt clean, like as the ſore eye taketh harme by looking vpon the Sunne. Secondarily, not at all times, but when we be repoſed, and at reſt from all outward dregs and trouble, and when that our heades be not encombred with other worldly and wandring imaginations: as if a man ſhould mingle balme and dirt together. For he that ſhall iudge and determine ſuch matters and doubtes of Scriptures, muſt take his time when he may applie his wittes thereunto, that he may thereby the better ſee and diſcerne what is trueth. Thirdly, where, and in what audience. There and among thoſe that haue bene ſtudious to learne: and not among ſuch as haue pleaſure to trifle with ſuch matters, as with other thinges of paſtime, which repute for their chiefe delicates, the diſputation of high queſtions, to ſhewe their wittes, learning, and eloquence in reaſoning of high matters. Fourthly, it is to be conſidered how farre to wade in ſuch matters of difficulty. No further (ſaith he) but as euery mans owne capacity will ſerue him, and againe no further then the weakneſſe or intelligence of the other audience may beare. For like as too great noyſe hurteth the eare, too much meate hurteth the mans body, heauie burdens hurt the bearers of them, too much raine doeth more hurt then good to the ground: briefly, in all things too much is noyous: euen ſo weake wittes, and weake conſciences, may ſoone be oppreſſed with ouer hard queſtions. I ſay not this to diſſwade men from the knowledge of God, and reading or ſtudying of the Scripture: for I ſay that it is as neceſſary for the life of mans ſoule, as for the body to breathe. And if it were poſſible ſo to liue, I would thinke it good for a man to ſpend all his life in that, and to doe

none

none other thing. I commend the Lawe which biddeth to meditate and ſtudie the Scriptures alwayes both night and day, and Sermons and preachings to be made both morning, noone, and euentide, and God to be lauded and bleſſed in all times, to bedward, from bed, in our iourneyes, and in all other woorkes. I forbid not to reade, but I forbid no reaſon. Neither forbid I to reaſon ſo farre as is good and godly: but I allow not that is done out of ſeaſon, and out of meaſure and good order. A man may eate too much honie be it neuer ſo ſweete, and there is time for euery thing, and that thing that is good is not good if it be vngodly done. Euen as a flower in winter is out of ſeaſon, and as a womans apparell becometh not a man, neither contrarily, the mans the woman, neither is weeping conuenient at a bride ale, neither laughing at a buriall. Now if we can obſerue and keepe that is comely & timely in all other things: ſhall not we then the rather do the ſame in the holy Scriptures? Let vs not runne foorth as it were wilde horſes, that can ſuffer neither bridle in their mouthes, nor ſitter on their backes. Let vs keepe vs in our bounds, and on either ſide go not too farre on the one ſide, leaſt we returne into Egypt, neither too farre ouer the other, leaſt we be carried away to Babylon. Let vs not ſing the ſong of our Lord in a ſtrange land, that is to ſay, let vs not diſpute the word of God at all aduentures, aſwell where it is not to be reaſoned, as where it is, and aſwell in the eares of them that be not fit therefore, as of them that be. If we can in no wiſe forbeare, but that we muſt needs diſpute, let vs forbeare thus much at the leaſt, to do it out of time and place conuenient: and let vs entreate of thoſe things which be holy, holily: and vpon thoſe things that be myſticall, myſtically: and not to offer the Diuine myſteries in the eares vnworthie to hear them, but let vs knowe what is comely, aſwell in our ſilence and talking, as in our garments wearing, in our

feeding, in our gesture, in our goings, in all our other behauing. This contention and debates about Scriptures and doubtes thereof (specially when such as do pretende to be the fauourers and students thereof, cannot agree within themselues) doth most hurt to ourselues, and to the furthering of the cause and quarels that we should haue furthered aboue all other things. And we in this (saith he) be not vnlike to them that being madde, set their owne houses on fire, and that slay their owne children, or beate their own parents. I marueile much (saith he) to recount whereof commeth all this desire of vainglorie, whereof commeth all this tongue itche, that we haue so much delight to talke and clatter? And wherein is our communication? Not in the commendation of vertuous and good deedes, of hospitalitie, of loue betweene Christian brother and brother, of loue betweene man and wife, of virginitie and chastitie, and of almes towarde the poore: not in Psalmes and godly songs, not in lamenting for our sinnes, not in repressing the affections of the body, not in prayers to God. We talke of Scripture, but in the meane time we subdue not our flesh by fasting, watching and weeping, we make not this life a meditation of death, we do not striue to be lords over our appetites and affections, wee goe not about to pull downe our proude and high mindes, to abate our fumish and rancorous stomackes, to restraine our lust and bodily delectations, our vndiscrete sorowes, our lasciuious mirth, our inordinate looking, our insatiable hearing of vanities, our speaking without measure, our inconuenient thoughts; and briefly, to reforme our life and maners: but all our holinesse consisteth in talking. And we pardon eche other from all good liuing, so that we may sticke fast togethe in argumentation, as though there were no mo wayes to heauen but this alone, the way of speculation and knowledge (as they take it) but in very deede it is rather the

way

way of ſuperfluous contention and ſophiſtication. Hitherto haue I recited the minde of Gregorie *Nazianzene* in that Booke which I ſpake of before. The ſame Author ſaith alſo in another place, that the learning of a Chriſtian man ought to beginne of the feare of God, to ende in matters of high ſpeculation: and not contrarily to beginne with ſpeculation, and to ende in feare. For ſpeculation (ſaith hee) either high cunning or knowledge, if it be not ſtayed with the bridle of feare to offende God, is dangerous, and ynough to tumble a man headlong downe the hill. Therefore (ſaith he) the feare of God muſt be the firſt beginning, and as it were an A. B. C. or an introduction to all them that ſhall enter into the very true and moſt fruitefull knowledge of holy Scriptures. Whereas is the feare of God, there is (ſaith he) the keeping of the commaundements: and where as is the keeping of the commaundements, there is the cleanſing of the fleſh: which fleſh is a cloude before the ſoules eye, and ſuffereth it not purely to ſee the beame of the heauenly light. Where as is the cleanſing of the fleſh, there is the illumination of the holy Ghoſt, the ende of all our deſires, and the very light whereby the veritie of Scripture is ſeene and perceiued. This is the minde, and almoſt the wordes of Gregorie *Nazianzene*, doctour of the Greeke Church, of whome Saint Ierome ſaith, that unto his time the Latine Church had no writer able to be compared, and to make an euen match with him. Therefore to conclude this latter part, euery man that commeth to the reading of this holy Booke, ought to bring with him firſt and formoſt this feare of Almightie God, and then next, a firme and ſtable purpoſe to reforme his owne ſelfe according thereunto, and ſo to continue, proceede, and proſper from time to time, ſhewing himſelfe to be a ſober and fruitefull hearer and learner: which if he doe, he ſhall proue at length well able to teach,

though

though not with his mouth, yet with his liuing and good example, which is sure the most liuely and effectuous forme and maner of teaching. He that otherwise intermedleth with this Booke, let him be assured that once hee shall make account therefore, when he shall haue said to him as it is written in the Prophet Dauuid, *Peccatori dixit Deus, &c.* Vnto the vngodly saide God, Why doest thou preach my Lawes, and takest my testiment in thy mouth? Whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast bene partaker with adulterers. Thou hast let thy mouth speake wickednesse, and with thy tongue thou hast set forth deceit. Thou satest and spakest against thy brother, and hast slaundered thine owne mothers sonne. These things hast thou done, and I held my tongue, and thou thoughtest wickedly, that I am euen such a one as thy selfe: But I will reproue thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done. O consider this, ye that forget God, lest I plucke you away, and there be none to deliuer you. Who so offereth me thankes and praise, he honoureth me: and to him that ordereth his conuersation right, will I shew the saluation of God.

God be praised.

FINIS.